

11 DEC 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Procedure for Obtaining Portrait for Director or
Prior Directors of the Agency

1. Recently Mr. Lloyd called the undersigned in order to obtain information concerning procedures followed by Government agencies in obtaining portraits of cabinet officers, directors, or other heads of agencies. This was the second request of its kind received by the undersigned within the last two years. It, therefore, appears appropriate to document the findings with respect to this problem in order that they may be used for future reference.

2. My contact on this subject was Mr. Hugh Berger, U.S. Department of Agriculture, code 111-x6153, who has been dealing with this problem for a number of years. There is no specific regulation or law governing the painting of portraits with respect to prominent personnel of the Government. Also there is no established price limitation for such portraits, but it appears to be the accepted practice for Government agencies to negotiate as low a price as practical and reasonable, consistent with prices paid by other departments of the Government.

3. The Commission of Fine Arts will provide, upon request, brochures of artists which they consider to be competent and acceptable. Also, if the subject to be painted desires a specific artist of his own choice, the Commission of Fine Arts is available for consultation with respect to the individual's capabilities and acceptability.

4. When an artist has been selected, it is usually customary to prepare a letter commissioning him to paint a portrait and it is usually advisable in such commission to state the dimensions of the painting, size of the frame, and the agreed to price, including the cost of the frame. There is attached a copy of the most recent letter commissioning an artist to execute an oil portrait for Secretary Benson, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

5. In 1955 the following prices were paid for portraits:
Interior Department - \$2,385, Justice Department - \$1,500, Navy Department - \$2,500, Commerce Department - \$2,000, Agriculture - \$2,150, and State Department - \$3,500.

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6. In submitting the voucher for payment, it is advisable to attach an exigency statement. A copy of an exigency statement prepared by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, with respect to their most recent painting, is attached for guidance and information.

7. The size of portraits may vary but as a guide, it is noted that the most recent portrait of Secretary of Agriculture, Benson, was 36x48, with frame 4 1/2" in width.



Deputy Comptroller

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Attachments